

News from Ed Markey

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BREAKING OUR OWN NUKE RULES? U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE EASES CONTROLS ON EXPORT OF NUCLEAR MATERIALS

*Rep. Markey Asks U.S. Commerce Secretary For Details on New Relaxed
Nuclear Export, Re-export Guidelines*

WASHINGTON, DC – Although the U.S. Congress has yet to ratify the controversial Bush-Singh agreement to lift the ban on U.S. exports of controlled nuclear goods to India, the U.S. Department of Commerce is already relaxing export guidelines on the sale and export of nuclear materials. Three months after President Bush welcomed Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, to the White House and announced that he was seeking to increase nuclear cooperation between the two countries, no federal policy changes have taken place to authorize full civil nuclear cooperation with India but the Department of Commerce is already relaxing regulations that would remove six Indian nuclear entities from the list of nuclear entities required to hold licenses. Representative Markey (D-MA) has sought clarification from the Department of Commerce on the move to ease oversight of nuclear materials.

A letter sent today from Rep. Markey to U.S. Department of Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez about the new guidelines reads:

“The amended regulations, effective August 30, 2005, allow items controlled unilaterally by the United States for nonproliferation reasons to be exported or re-exported to India without a license. The new regulations also remove six Indian nuclear entities from the Entity List, permitting U.S. nuclear exports to be utilized at those entities without a license. I am disappointed that the Department adopted these revised regulations without providing any notice or opportunity for public comment. The new regulations implement a dramatic shift in U.S. nonproliferation policy that poses great risks for the future security of the nation and the world. At the very least, the public should have the opportunity to be heard before measures with such serious implications take effect.

Rep. Markey’s letter asks the Department of Commerce for more details on the scope of the new guidelines and concerns over the oversight measures in place to monitor any retransfers of these volatile nuclear materials.

Rep. Markey is the author of an amendment to the Department of State Authorization bill (H.R. 2601) to restrict the sale of weapons to India and honor the requirements of the Atomic Energy Act, which prohibits nuclear cooperation with non-nuclear weapons states not party to the non-proliferation treaty (NPT) and lacking full-scope safeguards, issued the following statement in response to the new U.S. - India joint bilateral energy statement on nuclear power.

“The Bush Administration is racing to ease the guidelines on the export of nuclear materials, ahead of any congressional approval, at a time when we still face a great risk of a nuclear terrorist attack,” said Rep. Markey. “It just doesn’t make sense that the U.S. would deliberately ease oversight on the transfer of any nuclear materials now. Not only are we unnecessarily putting our national security at risk, we are sending a message to other countries that it is acceptable to relax the oversight of nuclear material.”

For more on Rep. Markey’s work on non-proliferation or a copy of the letter check out:
<http://www.house.gov/markey/>